



#whyGT

Advocacy Quick Start Guide for  
**TEXAS HOUSE BILL 3**  
**2019**



TEXAS ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
**GIFTED & TALENTED**

# WHAT IS THE G/T ALLOTMENT?

Texas Education Code Section 42.156 provides for a G/T weight (allotment) for school districts. TEC Section 42.156 states,

*“For each identified student a school district serves in a program for gifted and talented students that the district certifies to the commissioner as complying with Subchapter D, Chapter 29, a district is entitled to an annual allotment equal to the district’s adjusted basic allotment as determined under Section 42.102 or Section 42.103, as applicable, multiplied by .12 for each school year or a greater amount provided by appropriation.”*

Facts about Section 42.156 (G/T Allotment):

- The G/T weight is 0.12
- The G/T allotment is worth \$165 million
- Not more than 5% of a district’s students in average daily attendance are eligible for funding under this section.--TEC 42.156(c)

# WHAT IS HOUSE BILL 3?

Put simply, House Bill 3 (HB3) is a bill in the Texas House of Representatives relating to public school finance and public education. HB3 was introduced by Rep. Huberty, chair of the House Public Education Committee on March 5, 2019.

Sections in HB3 that pertain to G/T education:

- “Each school district shall annually certify to the commissioner that the district has established a program for gifted and talented students under this subchapter.” (HB3 Section 29.124). This section further lays out penalties for districts that do not certify programs for G/T students.
- HB3 Article 3, Section 3.001 outlines a list of items to repeal, which includes the G/T allotment (TEC Section 42.156), among other allotment.

# WHAT IS TAGT'S POSITION?

On March 5, 2019, House Bill 3 was filed by the House Public Education Committee. The G/T allotment (TEC Section 42.156) is repealed in House Bill 3, Article 3, Section 3.001 (p. 184).

TAGT recognizes the leadership of Representative Dan Huberty and State Representatives who have worked on House Bill 3: The Texas Plan, increasing funding for our public schools. In many ways, House Bill 3 appears to be a positive step forward for public education.

However, the repeal of the G/T allotment will further deemphasize the importance of gifted education in Texas. TAGT asks Texas legislators to remove the G/T allotment (Section 42.156) from the list of allotments being repealed in HB3. This will allow for the G/T allotment to continue to support G/T students in Texas.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

TAGT encourages members to take the following steps:

1. Find your legislators and their contact information.
2. Share the TAGT Call to Action with your personal contacts.
3. Write a letter to your legislator. TAGT has provided a Sample Letter on HB3 (see p. 6 of this guide) that can serve as a base. However, we strongly recommend you *customize/personalize* this sample letter; form letters are not nearly as impactful.
4. Public testimony on HB3 will occur Tuesday, March 12, in Austin. Schedule for testimony is not available yet. If you would like to take part in the public testimony on Tuesday, contact TAGT by Monday, March 11 at 12 p.m. so we can provide you with more information and guidance.

# WHAT CAN I DO?

DO YOU HAVE ...	THEN DO THIS!
1 minute	Retweet or share TAGT's Call to Action.
1 minute	<u>Find out who your legislator is.</u>
5 minutes	Make a phone call to your legislator asking them to "not repeal the G/T allotment (Section 42.156) within HB3."
5 minutes	Write a quick postcard to your legislator asking them to "not repeal the G/T allotment (Section 42.156) within HB3."
5 minutes	Write an email to your legislator using the <u>sample letter</u> provided by TAGT (see p. 6).
5 minutes	Handwrite or print a copy of the letter to your legislator, sign it, and drop it in the mail.
10 minutes	Send an email to all the people you know who have email, sharing TAGT's Call to Action.
30 minutes (plus travel time)	Meet with your legislator within your home district. Share your #whyGT story with him or her. Don't forget to sign the guest book. Take a picture with your legislator and share it on social media!
1 day	Prepare a 3-minute statement and attend the public testimony in Austin on Tuesday, March 12.

# HOW TO CONTACT LEGISLATORS

Whether you are writing a letter/email or calling your legislator, here are a few tips:

1. *Address the Letter/Email Correctly:* Address them as The Honorable FIRST NAME LAST NAME and include “Texas House of Representatives” or “Texas Senate.” When opening your letter, refer to them as Representative or Senator. See our sample letter for an example of how to do this.
2. *Be Specific:* State that you are referring to House Bill 3. Do not address other bills within this letter.
3. *Identify Yourself:* Include your name and where you live so your legislator knows you are a constituent.
4. *Get to the Point:* Follow your introduction with a brief statement of your issue or concern. Be specific in stating, “Although I support House Bill 3, I ask that you do not repeal Section 42.156 within this bill.”
5. *Share Your #whyGT Story:* Include specific information about how HB3 will impact educators, students, or schools within the legislator’s district by sharing your own personal story as one of his or her constituents. Provide the facts about G/T shared with you by TAGT.
6. *Allow for Follow Up:* Include specific contact information and offer to connect the legislator or staff to TAGT if they have questions or need additional information. State in the letter that you will follow up with a telephone call.
7. *Keep TAGT Posted:* If your legislator would like more information or has questions, please contact us. We are happy to get facts about G/T in Texas, along with more information on TAGT’s position, to legislators.

# SAMPLE HOUSE BILL 3 LETTER

The Honorable **FIRST NAME LAST NAME**  
Texas House of Representatives  
Room **OFFICE NUMBER IF MAILING**, Texas State Capitol  
Austin, TX 78701

RE: House Bill 3: Protect G/T Funding--Remove Section 42.156 From Article 3 Repealer Section (Section 3.001)

Dear Rep. **LAST NAME**,

My name is **YOUR NAME**, and I am a resident of **YOUR TOWN**, within your legislative district. I am writing today to urge you to make changes to House Bill 3 that will protect gifted and talented education. Specifically, I am asking for the Texas Legislature to remove Section 42.156 from the repeal list within Article 3 Repealer Section (Section 3.001) of HB3.

The G/T allotment directly affects the services my child receives. This funding is important to my family because **EXPLAIN WHY G/T IS IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOUR STUDENT. TELL YOUR STORY.**

The elimination of this funding will also affect G/T students across Texas. I am firmly opposed to House Bill 3 repealing the G/T allotment for the following reasons:

- The allotted funds directly impact the more than 425,000 students identified as gifted in Texas.
- Eliminating the allotment will leave more students underidentified.
- G/T students are a vulnerable student population that can be “at-risk.”
- Being “gifted and talented” is neither a badge of honor, nor a reward for good behavior.
- Being “gifted and talented” is an educational diagnosis requiring gifted programs and services for G/T students to reach their full potential.

In conclusion, I encourage you to propose changing House Bill 3 so that Section 42.156 is not on the list of Texas Education Codes to be repealed within Article 3, Section 3.001 of House Bill 3. If you have questions or would like more information, please let me know—I would love to meet with you or connect you with more information on G/T in Texas. I appreciate your time and your service to your district’s constituents.

Best,  
**YOUR SIGNATURE AND NAME**